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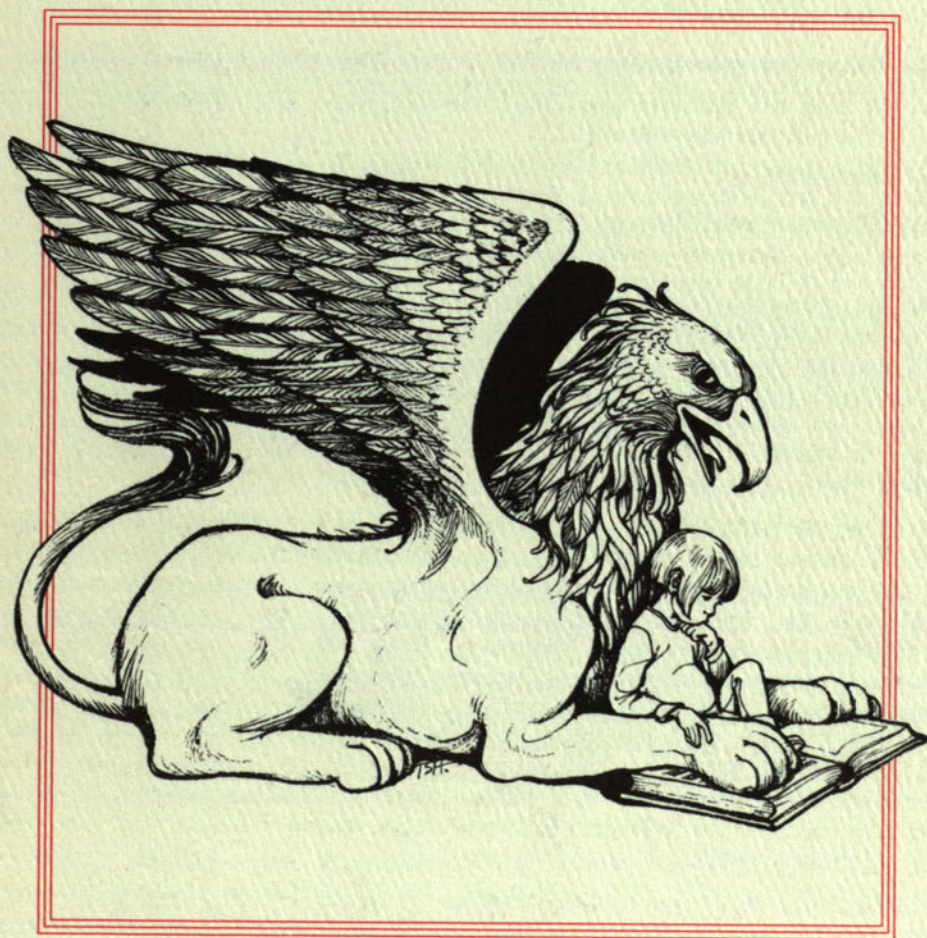
THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

APRIL 1990

VOLUME 43

NUMBER 8



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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

- * Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
- R Recommended.
- Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
- M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
- NR Not recommended.
- SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
- SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.
- C.U. Curricular Use.
- D.V. Developmental Values.

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The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

Volume 43

APRIL, 1990

Number 8

New Titles for Children and Young People

Aaseng, Nathan. *Better Mousetraps: Product Improvements That Led to Success*. Lerner, 1990. ISBN 0-8225-0680-7. 80p. illus. with photographs. \$10.95.

Ad Gr. 5-7. A collective biography examines the careers of eight people whose ideas and/or inventions improved on less than successful products already in existence. Photographs, most of which are promotion shots, illustrate the pieces on Elisha Otis, King Gillette, George Eastman, Margaret Rudkin (the only woman and the developer of Pepperidge Farm bread) and others. The writing style is flat, and the repetition of pattern in each biography does not alleviate the static quality. This could be useful as supplementary curricular reading for a unit on economics, especially because marginal notes give definitions and examples of such terms as "wholesale," "market share," and "test market." A brief reading list and an index are provided. ZS
C.U. Industries

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Ugly Duckling*; ad. and illus. by Troy Howell. Putnam, 1990. ISBN 0-399-22158-1. 38p. \$15.95.

R Gr. 3-5. Romanticized paintings, Victorian in mood and in details of costume, alternate, in single or double-page spreads, with pages of text. Howell handles light deftly, and his work has textural variation that strengthens portrayals of both humans and animals. His adaptation adheres to the original fairly well, combining sentences at times, at other time breaking a long sentence in two. Setting aside the question of whether Andersen's work needs to be adapted, this is a lush edition of an enduring favorite. ZS
D.V. Self-confidence

Baynes, Pauline, comp. *Thanks Be to God: Prayers from around the World*; comp. and illus. by Pauline Baynes. Macmillan, 1990. ISBN 0-02-708541-4. [32p]. \$9.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R 3-7 yrs. While most of the thirty-five prayers contained herein are of Christian origin, none get any more specific than "Father," "Lord," "God," or "Chief": "Oh thou great Chief,/ light a candle in my heart,/ that I may see what is therein,/ and sweep the rubbish from thy dwelling place." That is a "prayer of an African schoolgirl"; the others will be similarly new to most children. This is a thoughtful collection of prayers, most brief and many rhyming, that appeal without dogmatic distractions to a child's sense of the

Infinite. Delicate ornamentations are scattered throughout the spaciouly set text, with the bottom third of each page given over to precise, small-scaled illustrations that unify the prayers/poems on each spread. An Edenic spread nestles an amicable collection of beasts to illustrate two prayers for animals. Children and pets take a crisp sunrise walk to school: "Thank you, God, for this new day/ In my school to work and play." "From ghoulies and ghosties and long-leggety beasties . . ." shares a double-page spread with other bedtime pleas, all gaining credence from the ghostly-green collection of nighttime frights giving way to a sunrise so bright that flowers fly off the bedspread. A reflective resource. RS

D.V. Religious understanding

Bos, Burny. *Prince Valentino*; illus. by Hans de Beer. North-South/Picture Book Studio, 1990. ISBN 1-55858-089-1. 26p. \$13.95.

R 5-8 yrs. Valentino is an only frog spoiled by his doting mother, who calls him her little prince, and his father, who gives him a sports car. Eventually his superior attitude alienates his friends and family, so he sets out in search of a princess to prove he's a prince. On his journey of self-discovery, Valentino rescues a baby bird, who turns out to be a true friend despite the fact that, as she grows taller, Valentino recognizes her to be the frog's worst enemy, a stork. The idea that your identity rests on your deeds and ultimately awaits in your heart is neatly couched in traditional terms of a child seeking his fortune and finding help from the one he helps. It's longish for a picturebook story, but the fairy tale motifs will settle young listeners, who can enjoy the generously scaled, innocently comical watercolors along the way. BH D.V. Friendship values

Brett, Catherine. *S.P. Likes A.D.* Women's Press, 1990. ISBN 0-88961-142-4. 119p. \$6.95

R Gr. 7-10. Lacking the excesses of melodrama that often plague the teenage coming-out novel, this is a simply told, straightforward story about a girl's first realization that she may be a lesbian. Ninth-grader Stephanie finds herself attracted to classmate Anne Delaney, even if she isn't sure exactly why. "In her thoughts Anne Delaney was just—well—there. She wasn't doing anything or saying anything. She was just standing around." A group sculpture project not only allows Stephanie to spend more time with Anne, it brings her friendship with an older lesbian couple enlisted to help with the project. Kate and Mary are a refreshingly relaxed pair of role models whose conversations with Stephanie are enlightening but never didactic. "If you are gay, then sooner or later you'll know for sure. You'll be attracted to someone who's attracted to you. You'll know." And, while her passion for Anne remains unrequited, Stephanie becomes comfortable enough to confide in her best friend, whose response is matter-of-fact: "Why Anne Delaney? She's sort of a jerk." Unassuming and non-threatening, this is a friendly fictional introduction for gay and straight kids alike. RS

Burningham, John. *Hey! Get Off Our Train*; written and illus. by John Burningham. Crown, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-517-57643-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-517-57638-4. 48p. Library ed. \$14.99; Trade ed. \$14.95.

R 4-7 yrs. Only Burningham could make an ecological fable so much fun. The child is hero here from the start, as the mother's unsympathetic words establish immediately: "You aren't still playing with that train are you? Get into bed immediately. You know you have to be up early for school tomorrow." The boy does, and dreams that he and his stuffed dog, now an efficient railroad engineer, are speeding through the countryside playing games and, by the by, picking up endangered animals ("They are cutting down the forests where I live, and soon there will be none of us left," says the tiger). Each time they stop to play (ghosts, swimming, kite flying, umbrella, snowball throwing), another animal comes on board until it's time to go home. When the boy's mother wakes him up for school, there seem to animals all over the house ("Does this have anything to do with you?"). Spacious drawings contrasted with deeply textured landscape paintings create a striking effect as the artist juggles antic humor with a serious message—and never misses a beat. BH
D.V. Ecological awareness

Byers, Rinda M. *Mycca's Baby*; illus. by David Tamura. Orchard, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08428-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05828-X. 32p. Library ed. \$13.99; Trade ed. \$13.95.

R 4-7 yrs. In a close-knit extended family, young Mycca anticipates her Aunt Rose's first baby with longing. She visits her grandparents' house, where Grandma has prepared a crib and diapers ("The baby can sleep in our spare room while you're working, Rose") and begs her own parents to have another baby. This is a hard-working cast of characters: Aunt Rose and her husband Robert live in a trailer, and Rose keeps house for senile, elderly Maudie next door while Robert works in a feed store. Mycca's father admits that he cannot earn enough to support more children than Mycca and her brother, but when the baby arrives, Rose makes sure that Mycca and newborn Serenity share a loving cousinly cuddle. Strokes of cheerful realism raise this common story above the ordinary: "I wish the baby was born. My feet hurt. And I look like a pig," complains Rose; later, Mycca bluntly describes Maudie as forgetting everything, including Rose, who takes care of her every day. Rounded shapes and comfortable figures give the warm-hued illustrations a reassuring tone just right for the text as well as for young listeners who are experiencing the anxiety of a new baby coming along. BH
D.V. Baby, adjustment to

Chang, Margaret. *In the Eye of War*; by Margaret and Raymond Chang. McElderry, 1990. ISBN 0-689-50503-5. [224p]. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 5-7. The family had moved to Hong Kong, then to Shanghai, to escape the Japanese. In the last year of World War II, Shanghai was (to explain the title reference) a quiet center of the storm, since those Chinese who didn't attract attention were reasonably safe in spite of the presence of the Japanese. This account of what it was like to live there and to welcome the end of the war is based on the experiences of co-author Raymond Chang, who contributes authentic details, the intimacy of memory, and a perspective that may be new to many readers. Added attractions include a smooth writing style, and the candor and depth of characterization of the protagonist, ten-year-old Shao-Shao, Little Brother in a large family. ZS

Colman, Hila. *Forgotten Girl*. Crown, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-517-57592-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-517-57591-4. 153p. Library ed. \$13.99; Trade ed. \$12.95.

Ad Gr. 6-9. Fourteen-year-old Kelly is the narrator, and her story is a believable but slow-moving development of a family as they are affected by the past, by emotional inertia, by selfish need on the parts of Kelly and her mother and brother, and by the catalyst of criminal behavior. Kelly, bitterly aware that her mother dotes on Eliot, who is as sugary to his mother as he is acerbic to his sister, is stunned when she discovers that responsible, conforming Eliot is a thief. Mom's reaction, when Kelly tells her, is anger at Kelly and disbelief in what Kelly says. The book ends with a clearing of the air that is achieved by the intervention of a family counselor, an ending that promises improved relationships but indicates that it will take time to achieve them. Unevenly paced but adequately written, the story has characters that are psychologically convincing but seem more projections of examples in case histories than they are individuals. ZS

D.V. Brother-sister relations; Ethical concepts; Mother-daughter relations

Duffy, James. *The Man in the River*. Scribner's, 1990. ISBN 0-684-19161-X. 165p. \$13.95.

Ad Gr. 7-9. In a sequel to *Missing* (BCCB 3/88) and set six months after it, retired police officer Agatha Bates again solves a crime; this time it is the death of the father of Sandy and Kate (the kidnapping victim of the earlier book). Their mother asks Agatha to look into the death of her estranged husband: was his drowning an accident or a suicide or murder? Did the fact that he had taken out a large life insurance policy of which Kate and Sandy were the beneficiaries indicate some change in his life style? This is, although slow-moving, an adequate account of investigative detection. It has believable characters, but the girls (ten and twelve) really play minor roles and this may disappoint readers who look for more than passive participation on the part of characters with whom they can identify. ZS

Fleischman, Paul. *Saturnalia*. Zolotow/Harper, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-021913-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-021912-2. [128p]. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 7-10. A wicked humor informs this stern tale set in the "tombstone-cracking cold" of colonial Boston. William, the printer Charles Currie's brilliant fourteen-year-old apprentice, is an Indian, and thus a thorn in the side of Mr. Baggot, local tithing-man, zealot, and sneak. In fact, Mr. Baggot regards the entire Currie family with suspicion: although assured that the family does not celebrate the "reeking" holiday of Christmas, Baggot has heard they indulge in the far more pagan festivity of Saturnalia, the day on which masters and servants trade places. Several sets of masters and servants people the story, with pratfalls provided by the wigmaker Mr. Hogwood and his conceited manservant Malcolm, both courting ladies and disaster. While William has a good situation, he still searches for his Narraganset family, finally finding his great-uncle and a cousin living in abusive slavery. The writing here is dense and complex, but the antique styling has a read-aloud rhythm that complements the steady storytelling. RS

C.U. History—U.S.—Colonial

D.V. Pride in background and heritage

Friedman, Ina R. *The Other Victims: First-Person Stories of Non-Jews Persecuted by the Nazis*. Houghton, 1990. ISBN 0-395-50212-8. [176p]. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 7-12. Thirteen narrators relate their experiences during the Holocaust, when they were imprisoned in labor or concentration camps as being degenerates, enemies of the Nazi state, pollutants of the Aryan race, or simply occupants of territories conquered for German "living space." Friedman, author of *Escape or Die: True Stories of Young People Who Survived the Holocaust*, has researched the history of these 5 million doomed offenders and interviewed a few who survived. Her brief chapter introductions provide background for accounts by a Gypsy, a Catholic priest, a Jehovah's Witness, a deaf girl sterilized because of her disability, a Jew married to a Christian doctor, two dissident students, Czech and Polish resistance fighters, and two Dutchmen captured for slave labor. Although some historical context is provided for persecution of blacks and homosexuals, a lack of living witnesses is cited for including no personal accounts. The preface acknowledges sources, some personal, some archival, while a concluding list suggests other children's and young adult books on the subject. Well organized and edited, the tales are harrowing, though they all end happily, often with escape or immigration to America and highly successful careers. Friedman points out that these were the lucky ones, and her book serves as a much-needed reminder that the Nazi nightmare extended far beyond Europe's Jewish population. BH
C.U. History—World War II, 1939-1945
D.V. Courage

Gherman, Beverly. *Agnes de Mille: Dancing Off the Earth*. Atheneum, 1990. ISBN 0-689-31441-8. 138p. \$13.95.

R Gr. 6-10. Chapter notes and a bibliography indicate the research done by the author on the life of one of this country's outstanding dancers and choreographers. With no parental support, with a late start in beginning the study of ballet, and with the knowledge that she did not have "the ideal ballet body," Agnes de Mille persisted, practiced, and worked until a stroke ended her ability to dance. Anecdotes drawn from de Mille's own books and articles provide lively color and intimate details, so that this biography presents a perceptive picture of an artist struggling to gain self-confidence as well as acclaim. The text is cohesive, coherent, and flowing despite some awkward phrases. ZS
C.U. Dancing, study and teaching

Gibbons, Gail. *Weather Words and What They Mean*. Holiday House, 1990. ISBN 0-8234-0805-1. 32p. \$13.95.

Ad Gr. 2-4. Although this has a picture-book look and format, the degree of detail provided seems to indicate an older audience. Gibbons bases her introduction to weather on four terms: temperature, air pressure, moisture, and wind. Discussion of these terms necessarily brings up other, more complicated words such as humidity, cumulonimbus, and hurricane. Definitions and sequencing are clear (although in common with most forecasters, Gibbons names but fails to elucidate the difference between *partly sunny* and *partly cloudy*), and illustrations are typically schematic if somewhat more relaxed than is usual for this artist. The words under discussion are placed in speech-balloons within each

picture; clear enough when a little boy says "rainbow," but more often leaving to the reader's imagination whether the implied speaker is the author, the margin, God, or Willard Scott. RS
C.U. Weather

Gifford, Griselda. *Revenge of the Wildcat*. Canongate/David & Charles, 1990. ISBN 0-86241-216-1. 104p. \$17.95.

Ad Gr. 5-7. First published in Scotland, this is a first-person account by Tim (English, on a vacation with his parents and older sister) of his adventures at a Scottish farm. Mrs. MacPherson is a widow who, for financial reasons, is on the verge of selling the farm to an American; her son Alan (Tim's age) is sure that if he can find the reputedly buried family treasure, he and his mother can keep the farm. Unlike the other visitors, Tim sees MacPherson ghosts from the past, and it is in part through these glimpses of earlier MacPhersons that he helps find the treasure, save the farm, and make a friend of dour Alan. There's plenty of action and a happy ending to satisfy some readers, but the book is weakened by the awkward combining of fantastic episodes with the realistic matrix, and to a lesser extent by the fact that the characters—while believable—lack depth. On the other hand, the writing style is adequate and the setting colorful. ZS

Golenbock, Peter. *Teammates*; illus. by Paul Bacon. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1990. ISBN 0-15-200603-6. [32p]. \$15.95. Reviewed from galleries.

R Gr. 2-4. Line-and-wash drawings and some photographs illustrate a book that is in picture book format but is textually best suited to primary-grade independent readers. Plenty of white space and not too much print on each page make a famous baseball story easy to read; most fans know the story of Jackie Robinson, the first black man brought into the major leagues, and of the abuse he withstood with pained stoicism. "I want a man with the courage not to fight back," manager Branch Rickey had said. He and Robinson knew that acceptance might lead to more black players and to the end of separate black and white leagues. The denouement of the book is Pee Wee Reese's gesture before a hostile public, when he crossed the field to put an arm around the shoulder of his black teammate. There, rather abruptly, the book ends. Accessible, useful, and still touching, the book may mislead readers who expect, because of the title, a more substantial exploration of friendship. ZS

C.U. Physical education

D.V. Interracial understanding

Goor, Ron. *Insect Metamorphosis: From Egg to Adult*; written and illus. with photographs by Ron and Nancy Goor. Atheneum, 1990. ISBN 0-689-31445-0. 32p. \$13.95.

R Gr. 2-5. Brilliant color close-ups document the development of several species representative of complete and incomplete metamorphosis. The four stages of the first (egg, larva, pupa, adult) and three stages of the second (egg, nymph, adult) get well-defined explanations through examples of monarch butterflies, hickory horned devil caterpillars, mourning cloak butterflies, cecropia moths, mosquitoes, paper wasps, braconid wasps, praying mantids, dragonflies, and cicadas. Although each insect has characteristic variations, the repetition of molting and other patterns of change will help readers (this could also be read

aloud to a young audience) absorb the rhythmic cycles. Clear and concisely thorough. BH

C.U. Zoology

Graff, Nancy Price. *The Strength of the Hills: A Portrait of a Family Farm*; illus. with photographs by Richard Howard. Little, 1989. ISBN 0-316-32277-6. 80p. \$14.95.

R Gr. 4-7. "This is the story of life on the Nelson Farm . . . and of the kinds of work it takes to tend and hold on to one small corner of the Earth, generation after generation." An enjoyable photo-essay follows the daily routines of Bill and Jenny Nelson and their four children on a Vermont dairy farm. Clear black-and-white photographs are matched with an informative and occasionally sentimental text ("Haying has the grand and graceful movement of ballet"). Graff's obvious enthusiasm for her subject never clouds her presentation as she discusses the difficulties as well as the joys of farm life: Jenny must work at a part-time job to make ends meet, and the family can take a vacation only once every three years. During the course of a seventeen-hour work day, we follow Bill as he milks his cows, talks to the vet, mows a hayfield, and advises his children. We accompany Jenny on her mail route, and watch the children as they do their chores, work on their 4H projects, and go swimming. Along the way, Graff effortlessly works in many of the technical details involved in running a dairy farm, with an especially clear description of the milking process. The candid photographs convey the family's pride in their work. Graff stresses the sense of continuity underlying the daily routine, as Bill passes on to his sons the knowledge received from his father, who, though retired, still helps out on the farm. Sometimes the photographs speak louder than words, as Bill mows behind the cemetery where many generations of his farming ancestors lie buried. Graff helps us not only understand but also care about the Nelsons and their way of life. RAS

Hahn, Mary Downing. *The Dead Man in Indian Creek*. Clarion, 1990. ISBN 0-395-52397-4. 130p. \$13.95.

R Gr. 5-8. Even though Matt's getting tired of the too-cool mannerisms Parker has developed since they started junior high, he still defers to Parker's decisions: "he was, as my parents often pointed out, a natural-born leader, and I was a natural-born follower." Parker is the quintessential best friend your parents don't trust, and the resulting character dynamics create as much narrative tension as does the boys' discovery of a dead body in the creek. Hahn is a sure storyteller, with an exceptional command of suspenseful pacing and a plain understanding of what middle-graders find exciting. Matt's narration is believably that of an unprepossessing twelve-year-old boy who will attract plenty of empathy from readers. They will know what it's like to have a best friend who often seems less than that and who only grudgingly shows his need for you. With lots of appeal and vicarious excitement, this story is firmly grounded in the familiar—sometimes the scariest place of all. RS
D.V. Friendship values; Parent-child relations

Hallowell, Tommy. *Duel on the Diamond*. Viking, 1990. Paper ed. ISBN 0-14-032910-2. 122p. Paper ed. \$3.95.

M Gr. 4-6. Baseball buffs seem able to enjoy any story that has plenty of game sequences, and this does. Unfortunately, it has little else, the plot consisting of an overextended account of the change in the relationship (foes to friends, a time-worn pattern) between two members of a team. Characterization is slight, and the writing style is pedestrian. ZS
D.V. Age-mate relations

Harley, Rex. *Black November*. Gollancz/David & Charles, 1990. ISBN 0-575-04150-1. 139p. \$17.95.

R Gr. 7-10. A chain of murders begins when a young black saxophone player is unlucky enough to see a vicious criminal in an accidental encounter; the saxophonist's instrument, sold to the owner of an antique store, is the primary catalyst for two other murders. The saxophone is bought by Simon, an adolescent whose life is in danger because of this acquisition, which poses a threat (unmasking him) to the criminal. No happy ending here, no justice or retribution—instead, a logical conclusion to a book which is taut with suspense. The dialogue between Simon and his friend Matthew gives a note of contrast that lightens the mood of the story. This is Harley's first novel, and it should appeal to adults as well as to teenage readers: the characterization and dialogue are effective, the style and structure smooth and substantial. ZS

Holman, Felice. *Secret City, U.S.A.* Scribner's, 1990. ISBN 0-684-19168-7. [208p]. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

M Gr. 5-8. In the burned-out wasteland north of their slum neighborhood, best friends Benno and Moon colonize an old building, eventually turning it into a shelter for other homeless kids. As Holman has demonstrated in *Slake's Limbo* and *The Wild Children*, the city can be as treacherous and rewarding as the thickest wilderness, and the tools for survival are much the same: work, tenacity, ingenuity, amity. Here, however, the characters, plot, and ultimate thematic concerns—all potentially involving—are distanced by authorial commentary and an earnest didacticism. Each chapter, for example, begins with an italicized thesis: "*Today, yesterday, tomorrow: In a dead City they do not mean anything. There is no time: It is suspended. Something new is created that fills the space that time once did. Is it promise?*" Speaking in an unnecessary patois ("I'm gonna be president of the meetin' an' what I wanna know is if ya know other kids, like personal, or even maybe some bigger people, who stay inna streets"), the characters are subjected to much explanation and interpretation that leaves the reader with little to imagine. The ending, in which all the homeless boys find families (via the intervention of a sympathetic nurse), may be a crowd-pleaser, but it tends to sentimentalize all that has gone on before. Any survival story satisfies an elemental appeal, but as a whole this book is undermined by its own good intentions. RS

D.V. Cooperation; Friendship values

Howe, James. *Pinky and Rex*; ISBN 0-689-31454-X. *Pinky and Rex Get Married*; ISBN 0-689-31453-X. Each book: illus. by Melissa Sweet. Atheneum, 1990. 48p. \$11.95.

Ad Gr. 1-3. Pinky (so nicknamed because of his affection for the color) and Rex (a girl) are best friends in this new beginning-to-read series that features some mild sex-role-reversals and even milder adventures of the two friends, along with Pinky's pesty little sister Amanda. In *Pinky and Rex*, they go to the museum to see the dinosaurs; the friends are inspired to *Get Married* after Rex catches a bouquet at a wedding. While the vocabulary and sentence structure are appropriately simple and the situations familiar, there's not enough development or conflict in either of these stories to keep most new readers interested in discovering what happens next. Watercolor illustrations are plentiful, tidy, and bright. RS
C.U. Reading, beginning
D.V. Friendship values

Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Totem Pole*; illus. with photographs by Lawrence Migdale. Holiday House, 1990. ISBN 0-8234-0809-4. 32p. \$14.95.

R Gr. 3-5. Color photographs liberally illustrate a first-person text narrated by David, whose father is a skilled carver. They are members of the Eagle Clan of the Tsimshian tribe; David's mother has been adopted into the Eagle Clan although she is of European descent. David describes the way his father carves a new totem pole, pointing out the traditions associated both with the making of the pole and with the intricate ceremony of raising it and celebrating its installation. The writing is simple and direct, the tone of pride is strong, the information is not often found in books for children, and the book is imbued with cultural dignity and a sense of the value of the extended family and community. A glossary and an index make the contents accessible. ZS
D.V. Intercultural understanding

Jacques, Brian. *Mattimeo*. Philomel, 1990. ISBN 0-399-21741-X. [448p]. \$15.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 5-8. This sequel to *Redwall* (BCCB 7/87) features similar doses of villainy, violence, and revenge, as friendly woodland creatures face Deadly Peril at the hands of other, evil, animals. Three parallel stories are advanced at once: Mattimeo (son of *Redwall* mouse-hero Matthias), along with other *Redwall* young, is kidnapped by Slagar the Cruel (a fox) to be sold into slavery; Matthias and company go after them; the remaining inhabitants of *Redwall* are attacked by General Ironbeak and his flock of menacing birds. There's lots going on, although some readers might have trouble with the quick, cliffhanging shifts from subplot to subplot. While the action is fierce, characterization is often coy, with both villains and heroes talking like misplaced denizens of Disneyland. But those who stuck it out through the 350 pages of the first book will probably enjoy these 450 more. RS

Johnston, Ginny. *Windows on Wildlife*; by Ginny Johnston and Judy Cutchins. Morrow, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-07873-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-07873-7. 48p. illus. with photographs. Library ed. \$13.88; Trade ed. \$13.95.

R Gr. 3-6. "In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught." This prefatory quote from Baba Dioum sets the tone for an eye-opening

account of six synthetic wildlife environments for gorillas, penguins, rain forest creatures, hippos, tropical birds, and kelp-bed sea life. The writing clips along with a balanced look at the animals themselves, the human efforts to create and maintain habitats, and the research that constantly updates our knowledge of endangered fauna and flora. The authors are careful to note that breeding provides more specimens than collecting, a sign of environmental consciousness-raising among zookeepers, and to acknowledge that no exhibit can ever duplicate natural life in the wild. The index is inconsistent: gorillas are listed under "lowland gorilla," for instance, and birds are listed only under "R. J. Reynolds Forest Aviary," whereas both "hippopotamus" and "penguin" get main entries. However, children doing reports can access the information through the table of contents. Well-reproduced color photographs are both revealing and alluring in projecting a well-rounded text. BH

C.U. Nature study; Zoology

Johnston, Tony, ad. *The Badger and the Magic Fan: A Japanese Folktale*; illus. by Tomie dePaola. Whitebird/Putnam, 1990. ISBN 0-399-21945-5. 32p. \$13.95.

Ad 4-6 yrs. Bright oranges, purples, peaches, pinks, and reds flamboyantly illustrate a funny Japanese folk tale about a mischievous badger who lengthens and shortens noses with the aid of a magic fan. DePaola explains in the introduction that he has based his drawings on the "feeling" of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, although some may find the cartooning more reminiscent of Kurt Wiese's illustrations of *The Five Chinese Brothers*. The text is replete with sound effects for the read-aloud crowd ("tiptoe, tiptoe, tiptoe," "bzzzzzzzzzt!" "SNNNZZZZZZ") and also makes a few condescending comments to the young listener ("And, my, didn't that wake him up?"). The combined humor of the illustrations and fast-paced narrative guarantee a wide appeal for kids. For a more sophisticated but equally funny version, see *Gengoroh and the Thunder God*, adapted by Miyoko Matsutani. KP

LaBonte, Gail. *The Miniature Horse*. Dillon, 1990. ISBN 0-87518-424-3. 60p. illus. with photographs. (Remarkable Animals). \$12.95.

R Gr. 3-6. The title and color photographs will sell this book without further ado, but the text is clean and straightforward in describing the history and characteristics of the miniature horse. Child-size and affectionate, many of the animals are no bigger than dogs; in fact, they are sometimes treated as house pets, seeming as comfortable in a living room or car as they are in a stable. Their popularity is guaranteed to the point of supporting a number of ranches devoted just to the breed. An opening list of "Facts about Miniature Horses" and four chapters of generously illustrated information are concluded by a directory of "Sources of Information about Miniature Horses" (with current addresses), a glossary, and an index. This one will never stop circulating. BH

Landau, Elaine. *We Have AIDS*. Watts, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-10898-8; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-15152-2. 126p. Library ed. \$12.90; Trade ed. \$11.95.

NR Gr. 7-12. As is true of the author's *Teenagers Talk about School* (BCCB 12/88), this is an undocumented collection of monologues, in this case, allegedly by teens who have AIDS. As is also true of *School*, these voices all sound the same, and incorporate extensive information ("My mother

has a friend who's a nurse. She told me . . .") in a way that strikes a false, manipulative note. All nine narratives are fact-packed, grim (are there *no* helpful ministers, *no* helpful doctors?), and often sensationalized in a way that seems closer to the YA problem novel than it does to real life: "I felt like a dog on a short leash. I couldn't leave Larry. Like a baby who needs a bottle, I needed the needle. I hated myself. I hated Larry. But most of all, I hated the drugs that I wanted so badly." Seven of the teens describe how they contracted the disease (drug abuse, transfusion, etc.); the only two who don't are gay—leaving readers to infer that AIDS just automatically comes with homosexuality. The monologues are interspersed with factual information about AIDS which is correct save for two instances where Landau draws a parallel between marijuana and alcohol and "damage to the immune system." Her statement that "those involved in AIDS research now believe that up to 99 percent of these individuals [infected with the virus] will come down with the disease" is alarmist, overgeneralized, and not true. Scientific data (mostly drawn from the Surgeon General's report and from *McCall's*) are footnoted; there are a directory of AIDS organizations and a reading list. Landau's sensational treatment of a serious disease almost seems inadvertently to justify the AIDS hysteria she so loudly deplores; lead students instead to Susan Kuklin's angry, funny, and genuine *Fighting Back: What Some People Are Doing about AIDS* (BCCB 3/89). RS
C.U. Health; Social studies

Lander, Patricia S. *The Land and People of Finland*; by Patricia S. Lander and Claudette Charbonneau. Lippincott, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32358-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32357-3. 212p. illus. with photographs. Library ed. \$14.89; Trade ed. \$14.95.

Ad Gr. 9-. This potentially valuable resource sets out to cover Finland (a particularly interesting country in the light of recent Soviet developments) geographically, culturally, historically and politically. Unfortunately, stylistic and organizational lapses consistently frustrate the enterprise. Sophisticated words such as "unicameral" are left undefined, but the language occasionally becomes patronizing of its subject or reader, as in the last sentence of the book: ". . . Finland can be described as a spunky little nation that still has wilderness, courage, and dreams." Some subjects that should merit their own chapter or section, such as the Finnish language, are irritatingly marginalized in "boxes" of text that interrupt the main body of the chapter (to which the subject of the box may not be related). Despite the fact that the historical overview doesn't begin until chapter eight, historical events are alluded to but not explained throughout the first seven chapters. Although heavy—occasionally too heavy—on the technical when it comes to charts, the book has map problems: it inexplicably lacks a detailed map (only ten towns are listed on the primary map, and many locales referred to in the text are on no map at all), and a set of nine maps of "Borders of Finland from 1323 to 1944" fails to state that the shape used for comparison in each is the Finland of 1920 rather than that of 1990. The book is admirably even-handed and comprehensive, with a thorough history and an impressively up-to-date survey of economic, political, and artistic trends. Social and historical problems are discussed openly, with particular attention to the contribution and cultural status of women and the native minorities. A promising and ambitious book marred by self-sabotage, which a revision might repair. Index, bibliography and discography are included. DS

Le Guin, Ursula K. *Tehanu: The Last Book of Earthsea*. Karl/Atheneum, 1990. ISBN 0-689-31595-3. [226p]. \$15.95.

R Gr. 6-10. In spite of references to *The Tombs of Atuan* (BCCB 4/72) and other episodes in Le Guin's high fantasy series, the last book stands on its own with the development of a new heroine. The hope of the future lies in Tehanu, a child traumatized by abuse, deformed by fire, and saved by an aging Tenar's loving care. This is Tenar's story, too, and she is reunited with Ged in spite of his lost power and of threats from sorcerers hostile to women. Male misuse of power is an overt theme, and the villains here are vicious and unremitting in their misogynous violence. Since wizardry is on the way out—there's no archmage to replace Ged—it's not clear how Tehanu will develop her defensive powers unless she can count on timely appearances by the dragon Kalessin, a magnificent character but a *deus ex machina* nonetheless. Readers who have thrived on the *Earthsea* chronicles will no doubt extend this happy ending with explanations of their own shaping. A life-or-death plot and strong realization of the main cast sustain the book, despite representational secondary figures and occasional theorizing, for the ultimate effect of a solidly imagined world. BH

D.V. Fear, overcoming; Sex roles

Long, Kim. *The Astronaut Training Book for Kids*. Lodestar, 1990. ISBN 0-525-67296-6. 116p. illus. with photographs. \$15.95.

R Gr. 6-9. Although the "kids" of the title seems too juvenile for this book's audience—readers old enough to assimilate the often-sophisticated vocabulary and to want detailed information on preparing for a career as an astronaut—it should be useful and is both logically organized and comprehensive. The rather patronizing tone of the title is echoed occasionally in the text ("Your parents probably wish they could be astronauts, too, but they may already be too old") but information is given quite crisply, with chapters on space flight history and on future explorations and equipment preceding separate chapters on aspects of career preparation: physical fitness, computer technology, science studies, courses, organizations, etc. Names of institutions or programs are listed in each chapter, with addresses and telephone numbers. Information on astronaut training is provided, as are a glossary and a metric conversion table. ZS

C.U. Vocational guidance

Lottridge, Celia Barker, ad. *The Name of the Tree: A Bantu Folktale*; illus. by Ian Wallace. McElderry, 1990. ISBN 0-689-50490-X. 36p. \$14.95.

R 4-7 yrs. Drought has driven all the animals across the plain toward a fruit tree that will not bend down its branches until they learn its name, which only the lion knows. Both the swift gazelle and the proud elephant forget the name, Ungalli, but the steady young tortoise remembers, a resolution children will anticipate because of the popularity of the tortoise and hare tale in European and Afro-American cultures. The retelling has some joyful rhythms ("Ungalli, Ungalli, the name of the tree is Ungalli," chants the tortoise on his long journey) and appetizing refrains (the fruit is "as red as pomegranates, as yellow as bananas, as green as melons, as purple as plums, and as orange as mangos, and smelled like all the fruits of the world"). Wallace's earthtoned, stippled illustrations are well focused and drafted; several are so pale as to require

a close look—this is not for group showing—but the subtle compositions are well worth detailed attention. BH

C.U. Storytelling

Loxton, Howard. *Theater*. Steck-Vaughn, 1990. ISBN 0-8114-2359-X. 48p. illus. with photographs. (The Arts). \$15.95.

Ad Gr. 7-10. First published in England as one of the publisher's series on the arts, this is an oversize book profusely illustrated with color photography, along with some black-and-white pictures and diagrams. Although far from comprehensive, the text serves well as an introduction to the topic, including some theater history, some actors and playwrights, half a page for those who are interested in theater work, half a page for "Further Reading." Single and double columns are used in different ways on the pages, with italicized captions in the single columns. In sum: adequate information and organization, cluttered format, uneven coverage, and a rather dry writing style. ZS

C.U. Dramatics, study and teaching

Lyon, George Ella. *Come a Tide*; illus. by Stephen Gammell. Jackson/Orchard, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08454-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05854-9. 32p. Library ed. \$14.99; Trade ed. \$14.95.

R 5-8 yrs. In a picture book that will naturally be paired with Cynthia Rylant and Stephen Gammell's *The Relatives Came* (BCCB 12/85) because of similar rhythms, setting, and art, a young narrator describes the time her grandma's prediction of a flood came true. After four days and nights of rain, the backwoods mountain families seem cheerful about getting washed out, and many refuse to leave their homes ("I've got me a boat and I'm aiming to find the oars"). Even shoveling mud is a joyous occasion in these color-pencil and spatter-wash drawings, where homespun figures strike exaggerated poses of catastrophic disarray. Appalachian residents may find the verbal and visual imagery a bit quaint ("If it was me," says Grandma trailing biscuits and coffee in her shabby housedress and railroad cap, "I'd make friends with a shovel"), but the child's-eye view of disaster-as-exciting-adventure offers a tonal balance of enthusiastic bounce and reassuring warmth. BH

C.U. Weather

Mace, Elizabeth. *Under Siege*. Orchard, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08471-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05871-9. [224p]. Library ed. \$13.99; Trade ed. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 7-9. Morris' mother has insisted they spend their Christmas holidays with relatives he hardly knows. But Morris doesn't need to know his eccentric young uncle in order to appreciate the huge model of a medieval castle and village in which a computer program controls lifelike battles fought by plastic lords and peasants. Taking on the role of a god to the little model figurines who come to life only in his presence, Morris retreats into the fantastic qualities of the game as he deals with his anger and confusion about his parents' separation. There are some holes in this potentially good plot (based on "War Game," a short story by Philip K. Dick), and Morris' feelings about his parents' failing marriage are never adequately described except when he has a rare sentimental thought ("All the people I love are taken away from me"). The

fantasy element is disappointing and flat because Morris is basically an observer, not an actor, in the game. Mace's detached development of both characters and plot is incongruous with the easy ending—"LOVE CONQUERS ALL." KP
D.V. Family relations

Maestro, Betsy. *Temperature and You*; illus. by Giulio Maestro. Lodestar, 1990. ISBN 0-525-67271-0. 32p. \$13.95.

R 4-7 yrs. A basic introduction to temperature begins with the weather (and an illustration of melting icicles) and makes a logical progression to heating and air-conditioning, cooking and refrigeration, and, finally, body temperature. While not making a clear distinction between temperature (a measured degree of heat) and heat itself, the book is generally characterized by an age-appropriate use of examples (snowman, oven), concepts (skin is "a little like a blanket"), and advice ("You cannot control the temperature outside. Inside your house, you can change the temperature to make it more comfortable"). Color illustrations are stiff but large, clear, and sensible. An end note expands on some of the concepts mentioned in the text, useful for parents who wonder why shivering makes you warmer. RS

C.U. Weather

D.V. Environmental concepts

Marzollo, Jean. *Pretend You're a Cat*; illus. by Jerry Pinkney. Dial, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-0774-6; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-0773-8. 32p. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95.

Ad 3-5 yrs. On oversize pages, each double spread consists of a large painting of an animal, a smaller painting—boxed—of children imitating the animal, and of a series of questions. Sample "Can you climb? Can you leap? Can you stretch? Can you sleep? Can you hiss? Can you scat? Can you purr like a cat? What else can you do like a cat?" The pictures of children, black and white, are pleasant, but it is in the painting of animals that Pinkney excels. This may be useful as a stimulus for very young children in imitative play or physical training, but it's not very substantial poetry and seems an overextended concept as a book. ZS

Mills, Claudia. *Dynamite Dinah*. Macmillan, 1990. ISBN 0-02-767101-1. [128p]. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 3-6. Ten-year-old Dinah Seabrooke is an irrepressible crowd-pleaser who loves the limelight: she performs a class recitation of Millay's "Renascence" (the longest poem she could find), a dance with the school janitor's mop, and a frolic on the rooftop in the rain. Unfortunately, her new baby brother, whom she had expected to be an audience for her exuberant antics, turns out to be "the world's most useless individual." And when the coveted part of Becky in the class production of *Tom Sawyer* goes not to Dinah but to her best friend Suzanne, Dinah's jealousy causes a rift in their friendship. Dazzling Dinah's relationship with the modest Suzanne is unerringly depicted, as is Dinah's ambivalence about her only occasionally charming new sibling. Mills' heroine is an older Ramona, whose delight in herself is not only understandable but contagious. Even when (temporarily) reformed and abject, she cannot resist self-dramatizing: "And yet Dinah felt somehow sorry for the

world, deprived of humorous routines with her hose, denied the opportunity to hear another version of 'Renaissance.' . . . She was nicer than she had been before, yes, but undeniably less interesting." The writing is both savvy and sparkling, making Dinah a distinctive and memorable individual with broad appeal. DS

D.V. Baby, adjustment to; Friendship values

Morpurgo, Michael. *Mr. Nobody's Eyes*. Viking, 1990. ISBN 0-670-83022-4. [144p]. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 5-8. Ten-year-old Harry doesn't like his stepfather or the new baby and recalls with longing the time when he and his mother were alone together, united in their mourning for Harry's father, who was shot down over the English channel during World War Two. Harry has a secret refuge in the basement of the bombed-out house next door; a perfect place to hide and house the runaway circus chimpanzee Ocky, who seems to have attached herself to him. The two eventually light out for several adventures and near-escapes that provide a series of repetitive cliffhangers—the book seems about to end several times. Characterization is slender and stereotyped; there's lots of improbable but exciting action; the ending is a cozy reconciliation. A boys' book like they used to make them. RS

D.V. Stepparent-child relations

Moss, Elaine. *Polar*; illus. by Jeannie Baker. Greenwillow, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-09177-6; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-09176-8. [32p]. Library ed. \$13.88; Trade ed. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

NR 3-5 yrs. Photographs of stuffed toys are used in colorful but static collage pictures, illustrating the thin story of a white teddy bear (named "Polar") who has a tobogganing accident, receives attention and gifts from his friends, and recovers. Elaine Moss has had a distinguished career as a critic in the children's book world; Jeannie Baker has done some stunning work (in the same medium, collage) as an illustrator. This book, however, suffers from a self-conscious use of language ("Numb, dumb bear") and a whimsical plot overly dependent upon contrivance. ZS

Norsgaard, E. Jaediker. *Nature's Great Balancing Act in Our Own Backyard*; illus. with photographs by Campbell Norsgaard. Cobblehill, 1990. ISBN 0-525-65028-8. 64p. \$14.95.

Ad Gr. 4-6. A writer and a photographer take the young reader on a tour of their backyard, which, although presumably typical of many U.S. areas, is not identified as to location. The focus is ecological, with early sections lightly covering food chains, population balance, and "feathered helpers," while the major portion of the book describes specific insects—lacewings, ladybird beetles, praying mantises, wasps, stink bugs, dragonflies, spiders, and parasites. A few symbiotic species and mammals are also featured, along with a plug for natural waste recycling. This is a chatty text: "We planted dahlias around the bird bath because butterflies are attracted to them. See—a tiger swallowtail has landed on one. Come closer and watch it sip nectar through its long sucking tube." The organization is somewhat random and the

information occasionally repetitive in cataloguing the activities of representative insects. However, the format is accessible, with color photographs enlivening almost every page and an index and table of contents helpful for student reports.

BH

C.U. Ecology; Nature study

D.V. Ecological awareness

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw. *Flowers for Everyone*; illus. with photographs by William Muñoz. Cobblehill, 1990. ISBN 0-525-65025-3. 64p. \$14.95.

R Gr. 6-. Profusely illustrated with large, often dazzling, color photographs, this is a description of the flower-growing industry. It explains methods of propagation, concentrating on pollination and including cloning, planting seeds, and using cuttings. Patent discusses the patient gamble of individual gardeners and large nurseries in developing new varieties and gives some interesting facts about plants of special interest to many hobbyists—orchids, for example. The writing is crisp and direct; a glossary and an index are included. ZS

Paulsen, Gary. *The Boy Who Owned the School: A Comedy of Love*. Jackson/Orchard, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08465-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05865-4. 85p. Library ed. \$11.99; Trade ed. \$11.95.

Ad Gr. 5-8. Jacob Freisten spends his days at high school trying to remain invisible, because whenever he has been “seen, or noticed, or watched, things . . . happened. Ridiculous things.” Like getting stuffed into the trash can in the locker room by obstreperous jocks. Like being smiled at by beautiful Maria Tresser, which causes him to trip over his shoelaces and skid face-first along the gym floor. Like being picked out by his English teacher as needing extra credit, to be earned by working the fog machine in the play starring the adored Maria. The book, paced more like a long short story than a novel, consists primarily of Jacob’s agonized indecision about approaching Maria, resulting finally in fate bringing them together (to her satisfaction as well as his). In spite of the subtitle “A Comedy of Love,” Jacob’s trials are funny only in a raw-nerves way. The writing is clear and competent, however, and readers may find that the very unlikelihood of the popular Maria’s affection for such a schlemiel enhances the book’s appeal. DS

Paxton, Tom, ad. *Belling the Cat and Other Aesop’s Fables*; illus. by Robert Rayevsky. Morrow, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-08159-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-08158-4. [40p]. Library ed. \$13.88; Trade ed. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 3-5. As in this team’s first collaboration, *Aesop’s Fables* (BCCB 11/88), the rhyming text is set into spacious, dramatically lined spreads that project an ironic tone reflective of creature foibles. Rayevsky’s animals are acutely drawn, with figures and expressions exaggerated to witty effect, color restrained for maximum impact, and details imagined with quirky finesse. Paxton’s verses don’t always scan smoothly—he occasionally tosses discombobulating pentameters into an alternating tetrameter-trimeter scheme, for instance, or pads his quota of syllables with unnecessary words. On the whole, though, he brings a balladeer’s easy lilt to the tales, rendering the morals as

humorous as they can possibly be: "Who needs whom to feel complete?/ Feet need the stomach; stomach needs the feet!" BH

C.U. Language arts

Pierce, Meredith Ann. *The Pearl of the Soul of the World*. Joy Street/Little, 1990. ISBN 0-316-70743-0. 243p. \$15.95.

R Gr. 7-10. In the third volume of the Darkangel trilogy (BCCB 7/82 and 2/85), Pierce again achieves a triumph of style and concept over the drawbacks of convoluted intricacy and, to a lesser extent, the occasional bit of recapitulation. To save the world from her evil rival, Aerial must penetrate the stronghold of the witch and outwit her through magic—and, in the end, Aerial must choose between her own good and that of the world. The intrepid protagonist is a truly heroic figure, and her role in the struggle for good against the forces of evil is both credible and exciting within the parameters of an imaginative and forceful high fantasy. ZS

Pillar, Marjorie. *Pizza Man*; written and illus. with photographs by Marjorie Pillar. Crowell, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04838-6; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04836-X. 40p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.

R 4-6 yrs. While color photographs would have better caught the tangy reds and golds, the black-and-white photos here make a clear step-by-step introduction to the art of pizza-making. The text is exceptionally simple and direct ("I'm a pizza man. Let me show you how I make my pies") with action photos of pizzamaker Victor Hanna mixing the dough, stirring the sauce, and, of course, flipping the dough in the air. In all, this is a tribute to a favorite food, a first-hand introduction to sequence and process, and a strong portrait of a hard day's work . . . in heaven. RS

D.V. Occupational orientation

Pluckrose, Henry. *Move It!*; ISBN 0-531-14020-2. *Store It!*; ISBN 0-531-14021-0. Each book: illus. with photographs by Chris Fairclough. Watts, 1990. 32p. (Ways to . . . Books). \$10.40.

Ad 4-6 yrs. Although the backcover copy ("Each book focuses on a particular action verb . . .") appears to have been written by someone who hasn't read the books, these, like *Cut It!* and *Join It!* (BCCB 2/90) are crisply designed introductions to basic physical concepts. *Move It!* provides an unenlightening definition of gravity ("Our planet earth pulls everything toward it") but further pages on wheels and wind and power are clear and accompanied by exemplary color photos. *Store It!*, about containers, is also sometimes conceptually fuzzy ("The lids keep the contents airtight and stop them from changing") but features some intriguing questions ("Why does a perfume bottle have a smaller hole than a drink bottle?") and guessing games ("Can you match these things with their containers?"). Both books include some rather weak suggestions for further projects; prefer in-action enactments of the demonstrations mentioned above. RS

D.V. Everyday life concepts

Powling, Chris. *Hiccup Harry*; illus. by Scoular Anderson. Dutton, 1990. ISBN 0-525-44558-7. 64p. (Speedsters). \$10.95.

Ad Gr. 2-4. In the same invitingly designed series as Rose Impey's *Desperate for a Dog* (BCCB 1/90), *Hiccup Harry* is a one-joke book based on a situation most children find inordinately amusing. Everyone has suggestions for hiccup cures, but Harry can't stop and can't stop getting himself in trouble, as in the episode when his hiccup-halting headstand accidentally tips Harry into the school fire alarm. "Wait for me in my office, Harry." While this lacks even the minimal wit of *Desperate for a Dog*, the humor is direct and comfortably familiar. The many slapstick cartoon illustrations make it look like a joke book—an attractive prospect to the intended audience of beginning and reluctant readers. RS

C.U. Reading, beginning; Reading, reluctant

Quackenbush, Robert. *Clear the Cow Pasture, I'm Coming in for a Landing! : A Story of Amelia Earhart*; written and illus. by Robert Quackenbush. Simon, 1990. Trade ed. ISBN 0-671-68548-1; Paper ed. ISBN 0-671-69218-6. 36p. Trade ed. \$11.95; Paper ed. \$3.95.

M Gr. 3-5. Illustrated with cartoons that afford their subject more dignity than is usual for the series, this is an easy-to-read biography of the great aviatrix that includes all the pertinent high points and world records. Quackenbush doesn't flinch from the sadder aspects of Earhart's life ("Mr. Earhart was often drunk"), but who let slip the misspelling "Lindberg" in the text, captioning, and jacket copy? The series' trademark marginal comments are here delivered by birds, whose comments are sometimes funny, twice tasteless, and only occasionally pertinent. Endpapers chart Earhart's flights and standard plane maneuvers. RS

Ritchie, Alan. *Erin McEwan, Your Days Are Numbered*. Knopf, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-679-90321-6; Trade ed. ISBN 0-679-80321-1. [176p]. Library ed. \$11.99; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 5-7. Things are rough for Erin's family—her mom just lost her job and her dad, a nursing student, is thinking of going back to his much-hated job on an oil rig. Erin, twelve, takes an after-school job so she can slip money into the rainy day sock in her mother's dresser. Erin's problems multiply—she has to keep her job secret from her parents, she is about to flunk math, and her parents are increasingly anxious about their finances. All these problems are solved when Mom gets her job back and Erin passes math after her employer shows the school how Erin has spotted an important billing error at work. When faced with the fact that Erin can learn math if she is taught patiently, her insensitive teacher worries (uncharacteristically) if Erin likes him. The Nova Scotia setting is unusual and the story, although too-neatly contrived, comes to a satisfying ending. Math-haters will appreciate Erin's insistence that her teacher stop saying "math is easy"; instead, "math is hard but we have to do it anyway." KP

D.V. Teacher-student relations

Robbins, Ken. *A Flower Grows*; written and illus. by Ken Robbins. Dial, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-0765-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-0764-9. 32p. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95.

R Gr. 3-5. Hand-tinted photographs show each stage of the greening and growth into flower of an amaryllis plant. The pictures are handsome albeit repetitive, and the text is poetic if at times imprecise. The imprecision does not imply inaccuracy, but to say "then they nourish it and treat it with care, and the bulb rewards their effort first by sending up a tiny shoot of tender green" leaves unclear exactly what "nourish" means. Fortunately, an appended author's note gives more detailed information. This is attractive but perhaps limited in its appeal to children who enjoy or want to try gardening, since the tone is static and the topic a narrow one. ZS
C.U. Botany

Rogers, Paul. *The Shapes Game*; illus. by Sian Tucker. Holt, 1990. ISBN 0-8050-1280-X. 26p. \$12.95.

M 3-5 yrs. Designed to encourage children's visual acuity in distinguishing shapes, this book introduces circles, squares, triangles, crescents, rectangles, spirals, ovals, diamonds, and stars. A page that has a rhyming text and the appropriate shapes faces a page on which the shapes are combined in a montage. The rhymes scan, but the text displays dubious use of shapes; for example "I spy a snowflake/ The flashing of a gem/ A flower shape, a spark shape/ A twinkle-in-the-dark shape/ What's the word for them? STARS." Children may have seen flowers and sparks that were not star-shaped, or may be confused by the geometric facing page that has wavy lines, curved lines, and squares and rectangles of color. The pictures have a good sense of design but are minimally effective in presenting the concept of spatial variation. ZS

Ross, Tony. *Mrs. Goat and Her Seven Little Kids*; written and illus. by Tony Ross. Atheneum, 1990. ISBN 0-689-31624-0. 28p. \$13.95.

R 4-7 yrs. Although he has retained the basic plot of this old folktale, Ross updates the scenes with spoofy graphics that depict Mrs. Goat's children generating chaos with skateboard, toy tank, soccer ball, and other clutter while she sets off to the supermarket. The Hungry Wolf gets a music teacher to help him disguise his voice ("If you don't, I'll bite your beak off"), an artist to paint his paw to resemble a hoof ("Do a good job of it, and I won't bite your nose off"), and a dentist to cut off his telltale tail. When the kids finally open the door, they're all gobbled up except the youngest, who crawls from the coal bucket to tell Big Mother Goat, who in turn butts the napping wolf so hard that her kids shoot out of his mouth. The watercolor illustrations shift the story from a symbolic to a literal level, opening up an array of humorous possibilities that diffuse the suspense of stranger danger. The kids, for instance, evoke less sympathy when we can see the villain's obvious ploys—how could anyone be silly enough to mistake those painted claws for a hoof?—but the littlest goat's spunky suspicions restore a semi-heroic point of view and provide a happy ending. BH

Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. *Nate the Great and the Musical Note*; by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat and Craig Sharmat; illus. by Marc Simont. Coward, 1990. ISBN 0-698-20645-2. 48p. (Break-of-Day Books). \$11.95.

R Gr. 1-3. Easy-to read mysteries can seem tediously worked out to the adult critic; here Nate the Great laboriously decodes "A note. Step left

until you reach the middle. Step up and you will solve this riddle." The note's from Rosamond, who has taken to giving piano lessons (and rewarding her cats with gold stars), and it's addressed to Pip, who badly needs a haircut, so he can . . . "see sharp." While this doesn't have the smooth inevitability of a puzzle naturally solved, the story's clues are clear and logical, encouraging beginning readers to pay word-for-word attention. The easy-reading rhythms are played for humor: "I read the note once. I read the note twice. I read the note three times. Some things get better with time. Rosamond's note just got stranger." Simont's illustrations are cartooned with finesse. RS

Slote, Alfred. *The Trading Game*. Lippincott, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32398-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32397-2. 200p. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95.

Ad Gr. 4-6. One of a group of sixth-graders who enjoy trading baseball cards almost as much as they enjoy playing the game is Andy, whose collection is inherited from his father. One of Andy's friends has a card (rare, but of little value) that pictures Andy's grandfather, whose baseball career was brief. In Dad's collection, worth thousands, there's no card of Grampa. Through some intricate trading—including one card snatched by a friend—and through getting to know Grampa better when he agrees to help coach Andy's team—Andy, who is the narrator, gains perspective on the relative importance of trading, collecting, and valuing cards versus the pleasure of game participation and the problem of making quick judgments about others. This has the insight one expects from the author, and the credibility of situation and development that mark earlier books. What it lacks is pace, often being slowed by details that tend to be repetitive. ZS
D.V. Grandfather-child relations

Smee, Nicola. *The Invitation*; written and illus. by Nicola Smee. Little, 1990. ISBN 0-316-79894-0. 32p. \$12.95.

Ad 4-6 yrs. Ebullient, occasionally chaotic, the line-and-wash illustrations for an improbable story (first published in Great Britain) are colorful and offer more comedy than the text. Leo, who looks like he's about eight, finds a prize in a box of cereal: an invitation to a free night at Rosso's Restaurant. Mom dons a long dress, Dad a tuxedo, and Leo his best pants and a bow tie like Dad's. Rosso's Restaurant is stately and glamorous; a small combo plays sedately. All this changes when Mom invites the waiter to dance with her and their stellar performance proves a catalyst for other dancers. Mom swings from the chandelier; Leo finds the diamond earring lost by his partner—it's in his dessert. They are invited back the next evening by a delighted Rosso. A silly story, but its exaggeration and action will doubtless be appealing to young listeners. ZS

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. *Libby on Wednesday*. Delacorte, 1990. ISBN 0-385-29979-6. [196p]. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 6-8. Although she lived with her father, grandmother, and great-aunt, it was Libby's absentee mother who had insisted that Libby needed to be "socialized." That was the end of being tutored at home (wonderful) and the beginning of eighth-grade classes (boring) that covered material Libby had

learned years before. This isn't a mother-knows-best book, but it does develop into a story of peer relationships, group dynamics, and the evolution of strong friendships emerging from a writing club that Libby had originally resented as part of the abhorred socialization. The background, with its extended and supportive family, gives warmth and solidity to a novel that is percipient in characterization and believably positive in outcome. ZS

D.V. Age-mate relations; Family relations

Soto, Gary. *Baseball in April*. Harcourt, 1990. ISBN 0-15-205720-X. 111p. \$14.95.

R Gr. 5-8. Eleven short stories, told with tenderness, optimism, and wry humor, portray the lives of Mexican-American children in Fresno, heart of California's Central Valley. While the cultural context is authentic, the characters are all school-story ordinary and recognizable: a girl dismayed at the destruction of her Barbie doll ("‘Darn it,’ she hissed. ‘Her head’s gone’"); a boy who wants to be *The Karate Kid*; another boy whose lip-synching to a (skipping) record of "La Bamba" turns from humiliation to triumph. Chicano children and parents will be pleased to find a book that admits larger possibilities than the stereotype of the noble-but-destitute farmworker; kids of all cultures will feel like part of this neighborhood. RS

Stevenson, James. *National Worm Day*; written and illus. by James Stevenson. Greenwillow, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-08772-8; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-08771-X. 40p. Library ed. \$12.88; Trade ed. \$12.95.

R 4-6 yrs. In a format popularized by Arnold Lobel, Stevenson does a simple but classy job of telling three stories about an oddly assorted group of friends: a worm, a snail, a mole, and a rhinoceros, who offer three slice-of-life adventures supported by some minor characters. The stories are simple, funny, ingenuous, and—the seasoning that improves the flavor of those ingredients—salty. That touch makes the book appealing, as Herbie the worm celebrates National Worm Day, Rupert the rhinoceros discovers he isn't the most popular creature on the scene, and—in an episode with Herbie, Dawn the Mole, and Rupert—Rupert discovers that behavior modification can produce gratifying results. Stevenson manages to be comic with great economy of line and with touches of enjoyable incongruity: Rupert is a tender shade of lilac, for example, and he gets his tusk stuck when he tries to dig-and-disappear the way Herbie and Dawn do. ZS

Stock, Catherine. *Armien's Fishing Trip*; written and illus. by Catherine Stock. Morrow, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-08396-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-08395-1. 34p. Library ed. \$13.88; Trade ed. \$13.95.

R 5-8 yrs. Removed with his family to the Cape Flats by the South African government's Group Areas Act, Armien returns for a special weekend at his former seaside home of Kalk Bay. Bragging to his friends that his Uncle Faried is going to take him out for some "real fishing," Armien then stows away on the boat, which is caught in a terrible storm. This is universal adventure specifically set. The town and Armien's friends are an ethnic and cultural mix, a fishing community united by their bond with the sea. Double-

page spreads of all the neighbors at the dock are likewise multi-colorful, a strong and sunny contrast to the stormy, blue-washed pages of Armien's heroic rescue of fisherman Sam. Like Stock and Karen Williams' *Galimoto* (reviewed below) set in Malawi, *Armien's Fishing Trip* celebrates the singularity of its cultural context by touching chords common to kids everywhere. RS

Stolp, Hans. *The Golden Bird*; illus. by Lidia Postma. Dial, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-0751-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-0681-2. 56p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.

NR Gr. 4-6. Dying of cancer, eleven-year-old Daniel is comforted by a number of mystical visitations, including his dead father, three birds, and God. While giving a passing acknowledgment to the anger and sadness dying children experience, this is a passive, sentimental book, resolved with assurances of heaven and reunion with dead loved ones. It's too wispy to be effective fiction, and the non-sectarian free-for-all parade of bedside spirits would probably count it out for religious education as well. Line-and-wash illustrations are delicate and poignant, emphasizing the fragile mood of the text. RS
D.V. Death, adjustment to

Stowe, Cynthia. *Home Sweet Home, Goodbye*. Scholastic, 1990. ISBN 0-590-43001-7. [128p]. \$10.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 5-8. Being in a state of shock can make you do funny things. When Charlie learns that his dad wants to sell the house he and his mother have occupied rent-free since his parents' divorce seven years ago, he is stunned. How can he face moving to a new neighborhood and a new school in the middle of term, not to mention losing his best friend Mark? Is it any wonder Charlie performs some irrational acts, like picking a fight with the school bully or putting a dead fly in his father's girlfriend's drink? Charlie's first-person narration is humorous, but some of the subplots seem contrived: he befriends the school bully, who just happens to be transferring to Charlie's new school; he has his first date with a girl he met over the telephone, who will be at his new school, too. Charlie's frantic efforts to meet the moving day deadline are initially funny (as is his Mom's classic denial of the fact) but wear a bit thin towards the end, when his parent's quick reconciliation and projected remarriage provide a happy but too-convenient finale. Despite these flaws, Stowe's gift for comic dialogue and eye for the absurd make this an entertaining time-passer. RAS

D.V. Moving, adjustment to

Strauss, Gwen. *Trail of Stones*; illus. by Anthony Browne. Knopf, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-679-90582-0; Paper ed. ISBN 0-679-80582-6. 35p. Library ed. \$9.99; Paper ed. \$6.95.

R* Gr. 10-. A dozen sophisticated poems illustrated by Anthony Browne's pen-and-ink drawings are based on fairy tales, mostly from an anti-hero's point of view. The father of Hansel and Gretel confesses his weakness, the witch and a dwarf cast different lights on Snow White, an aging prince celebrates Rapunzel's patience, an ambivalent wolf awaits Red Riding Hood, Cinderella laments her childhood, Bluebeard pursues his solitary madness, the fox-woman reveals her dangerous double life, the frog princess triumphs with temper; the queen who outwitted Rumpelstiltskin longs for his company, the

Beast despairs of Beauty, and Sleeping Beauty contemplates her sensuous awakening. Strauss' style is lean but resonant with phrases that play on the characters and situation, while Browne's art probes the stories' darker tones of mystery. The wolf's slanted eyes peer enigmatically from a furred space between Grandma's frilly cap and a neatly turned sheet—a picture that deepens the suspense of his anticipation: "She will have the youngest skin/ I have ever touched, her fingers unfurling/ like fiddle heads in spring./ My matted fur will smell to her of forest/ moss at night. She'll wonder about my ears,/ large, pointed, soft as felt,/ my eyes red as her cloak,/ my leather nose on her belly." For high-school students, a meet companion to Anne Sexton's poetic fairy tale variants. BH

Tafuri, Nancy. *Follow Me!*; written and illus. by Nancy Tafuri. Greenwillow, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-08774-4; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-08773-6. [24p]. Library ed. \$13.88; Trade ed. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad 3-5 yrs. This wordless book follows a young seal as it follows a crab to its fellows and the sea, while mother (father?) seal looks on protectively. The thin plot will seem slight to even the youngest lookers, who may also question the chase's apparent change of direction halfway through the book. Tafuri's ink-and-watercolor spreads are, as usual, efficiently attractive, with the black-outlined animals posed against a stylized Arctic backdrop. Seals *do* eat crabs—and most tenacious toddlers will recognize the poetic injustice that keeps this one from even getting close. RS

Tompert, Ann. *Grandfather Tang's Story: A Tale Told with Tangrams*; illus. by Robert Andrew Parker. Crown, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-517-57272-9; Trade ed. ISBN 0-517-57487-X. 32p. Library ed. \$13.99; Trade ed. \$12.95.

R 5-8 yrs. Drawing on a traditional Chinese form of storytelling with seven standard shapes cut from a square of paper, Tompert recounts the tale of two fox fairies whose magic transformations almost end in death. As one changes into a rabbit, the other changes into a dog that hunts it, and the predator/prey transmutations escalate until one is shot by a hunter and the other rescues him. The sequence might become repetitive but for Parker's skillfully paced variations of composition, texture, pastel tones, and page design. His pen-and-watercolor art adds drama to the chase, while the stylized tangram insets will motivate children to try their own versions. The three-fold tangram crown above the publisher's name perhaps outdoes itself, since the rules of the game demand that "all seven tans must be used; they must touch, but none may overlap." However, not to quibble about a book that so ingeniously translates an old medium into a new one and that will prove trendsetting for storytellers who can extend the concept to flannel- and story-boards. BH
C.U. Storytelling

Tresselt, Alvin. *Wake Up, City!*; illus. by Carolyn Ewing. Lothrop, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-08653-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-08652-7. 32p. Library ed. \$13.88; Trade ed. \$13.95.

R 4-6 yrs. New illustrations interpret again the direct and evocative text, here revised, of a book first published in 1957. Tresselt's description of some of the things that happen when the day starts in a large city are just as applicable now as then; Ewing's paintings add some touches that will

please feminists (a policewoman, a woman bus driver—at least, a bus driver who could be a woman) and some that reflect the architectural variety, the bustle of various activities, and the multiracial composition of the urban scene. ZS
C.U. City life

Van Raven, Pieter. *Pickle and Price*. Scribner's, 1990. ISBN 0-684-19162-8. 202p. \$14.95.

Ad Gr. 7-9. Pickle is thirteen, a slow learner whose abusive father supervises a rural prison farm. Price is black and older, a convict who has just been released from the farm and who is determined to make something of his life. Price is not pleased when Pickle announces he's running away from home and wants Price to come with him in the car he's stolen from his father. The rest of the story deals with the encounters they have as they travel together, and with the respect and affection that grow as they get to know each other better. They work for a woman who cheats them, and for a professor; they meet a Native American who is an alcoholic and who befriends them; they have an encounter with police, and Pickle rescues Price by brandishing his father's gun, also stolen, then gives him the car so that he can get away. The author writes with good flow and pace, and his characters are believable; the plot seems—despite some dramatic moments and an adequate amount of action—weak, as though the structure were an appendage to planned relationships among the major and minor characters. ZS

C.V. Ethical concepts; Friendship values; Interracial understanding

Walter, Mildred Pitts. *Mariah Keeps Cool*. Bradbury, 1990. ISBN 0-02-792295-2. 140p. \$12.95.

M Gr. 4-6. *Mariah Loves Rock* (BCCB 10/88) was a lively, if choppy, friends-and-family story featuring black characters; this sequel is a disappointing combination of too much plot and excessive didactic overstatement. It's summer. Mariah and Lynn's troubled half-sister Denise has come to live with them; Mariah and her friends are training to compete in a citywide swimming and diving competition; Lynn is secretly helping the homeless. None of these plot threads is given its due, with Mariah's winning of the gold medal (over the favorite, a racist white girl) an unconvincing result for a girl who had never dived before that summer. The writing is often confusing ("Along with her natural force she moved in tune with the spring of the board to give herself the maximum lift") and earnestly belabored: "So try to understand Denise. She misses her mama and her friends. Give her time. Why don't you go back and tell her you won't mind if she doesn't go if she will wish you well and hope you win." Denise, in fact, is the most interesting character here, unaffected by the priggishness that seems to have developed in the other characters. RS

D.V. Sisters

Warren, James A. *Portrait of a Tragedy: America and the Vietnam War*. Lothrop, 1990. ISBN 0-688-07454-5. 208p. illus. with photographs. \$17.95.

R Gr. 7-12. Summarizing thirty years of history in fewer than two hundred pages is no easy feat. Warren's introductory survey of America's longest war gives his readers the big picture, providing concise descriptions and thought-provoking analysis. Beginning with the French colonialization of

Vietnam, Warren explains the rise of Vietnamese nationalism, the role of Ho Chi Minh, and the reasons for American involvement. Emphasizing the politics behind the war and the attitudes of American presidents from Truman to Nixon, *Portrait* shows multiple points of view: the attitudes of the North Vietnamese, Vietcong, South Vietnamese, American military, and public are all considered. Particularly helpful is Warren's ability to capture key concepts (counterinsurgency, containment) in a few sentences. Making judicious use of secondary sources, the author highlights key conflicts, military engagements and operations, providing the reader with enough background information to understand their significance. Unfortunately, some of the army-issue black-and-white photographs have a generic quality. One, captioned "A B-52 Stratofortress in flight over Vietnam" could have been shot anywhere. Maps, which would have been useful throughout the book, are limited to a handful in the first chapter. The map with the most information is also the hardest to read. But the oversize format, double-spaced text, bibliography, and chronology make this an accessible and helpful resource. Warren successfully proves his thesis that the tragedy of Vietnam was not only the massive loss of life but also the fact that the conflict ultimately was unwinnable, given the lack of popular support for the South Vietnamese government. RAS
C.U. History—U.S.

Watanabe, Shigeo. *Let's Go Swimming*; illus. by Yasuo Ohtomo. Philomel, 1990. ISBN 0-399-21896-3. 32p. (I Love Special Days Books). \$10.95.

R 3-5 yrs. Crayon drawings show small Bear moving from splashing about in a washtub on the lawn (Mrs. Bear supervising) to a visit to the municipal swimming pool (Mr. Bear supervising). Bear goes through the usual stages of trepidation and acclimatization and achieves a modicum of success at his first swimming lesson. Friends cheer, parents are patient and encouraging, and this is another example of a book in which Watanabe presents, simply and effectively, an event that looms large to a small child: the acquisition of a new skill. ZS
D.V. Parent-child relations; Self-confidence

Watson, N. Cameron. *The Little Pigs' Puppet Book*; written and illus. by N. Cameron Watson. Little, 1990. ISBN 0-316-92468-7. [32p]. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 3-4. Like *The Little Pigs' First Cookbook* (BCCB 11/87), this is an invitingly formatted project book, filled with good ideas and the kind of compulsively detailed asides so necessary to that favorite activity, *planning*. "For a winter scene: A. Choose a dark cloth. B. Pin white cloth or paper onto it for snowy ground. C. Glue on lots of cotton balls for snow." The puppet projects here, however, are more complicated than the cooking projects in the first book, so the picture-book format is somewhat at odds with the level of difficulty in the text. Included are instructions for three kinds of puppets, three kinds of stages, tips on script writing, special effects, ticket making ("Try to fit all information into a 1 1/2" x 3" space"), and refreshments, including instructions for origami-like "paper serving packets." As was true of the earlier cookbook, the framing story about the three brothers Pig is irrelevant and rather distracting, but the project pages themselves are perfect for those kids who love to follow the directions. RS

Weiss, Ann E. *Who's to Know?: Information, the Media, and Public Awareness*. Houghton, 1990. ISBN 0-395-49702-7. [192p]. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 6-12. In a lively exposé, Weiss argues that the "right" to know is fragile at best and can be easily crushed by political and economic interest. *Who's to Know* traces the history of censorship in Europe and the United States and expounds the thesis that the gains in access to information during the last thirty years were dramatically reversed by the Reagan administration. Weiss suggests that the media's ability to keep us informed is hampered by an increasing concentration of ownership, the need to attract advertising dollars, and the public's preference for "infotainment" and soft news. While she gives some dramatic examples of government coverups (from Watergate to radiation leaks), Weiss also shows that the media often blunders, unwittingly broadcasting government "leaks" and terrorist propaganda. Her extensive use of both historical and current events (from William Randolph Hearst's involvement in the Spanish-American war to CNN's coverage of Tiananmen Square) add depth to her analysis. Weiss marshalls her facts and figures with authority. She provides balanced coverage of such complex issues as personal privacy vs. the right to know, using as examples Gary Hart and a rape victim whose name was published in the newspaper. *Who's to Know?* should inject its readers with a healthy dose of skepticism about government and the media, and leaving them with a strong desire to ensure free access to information. RAS

C.U. Journalism; Social studies

Weiss, Harvey. *Cartoons and Cartooning*; illus. by Harvey Weiss and others. Houghton, 1990. ISBN 0-395-49217-3. [64p]. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

M Gr. 4-6. Although this book casually covers topics such as the history of cartoons (including the Bayeux tapestry, no less), various kinds of cartoons (comic strips, editorial cartoons, animated cartoons, etc), drawing cartoons, and "being funny," the immediate appeal, of course, is the illustrations. Unfortunately, too few of the cartoons included here are actually funny. This is partially because most of the jokes are stale, but the author's explanatory captions also deserve some of the blame: "In this gag panel the dogs are shown overdressed and uncomfortably hot while the not-too-intelligent looking hot dog man is standing by his wagon daydreaming or thinking about selling his hot dogs. Everything is in the one picture . . ." While many kids will read anything about cartoons and comics, they will probably be disappointed at the absence of their favorites; long on *Prince Valiant*, *Barnaby*, and *Felix the Cat*, this is fairly oblivious to the last twenty years and such kid-pleasers as *Garfield*, *Roger Rabbit*, and *Mad* magazine. The section on drawing is patronizingly uninformative: "A backward or forward C makes a good-looking ear," "Animal noses—especially on dogs and cats—are usually big black circles," "Hands, which are not easy to draw, can be done in many different ways." For more information, inspiration, and fun, try Harvey Kurtzman's *My Life as a Cartoonist* (BCCB 1/89) or Bill Peet's *Bill Peet* (BCCB 6/89). RS

Wenzel, Dorothy. *Ann Bancroft*. Dillon, 1990. ISBN 0-87518-418-9. [63p.] illus. with photographs. (Taking Part). \$9.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 4-6. Handicapped with dyslexia, young Ann Bancroft felt confident only outdoors or on the athletic field. She struggled through college and became a physical education teacher, climbing mountains in her spare time. In 1986, Ann, as a member of Will Steger's expedition, became the first woman to reach the North Pole via dogsled. Details of the polar expedition are sometimes unclear: "By the thirty-fifth day of the expedition, three sleds and twenty-eight dogs were left. Since the remaining three sleds were almost as heavy as they were in the beginning, their progress slowed." While conveying little of Ann's personality beyond laudatory references ("Determined and stubborn, Ann had beaten the odds, amazing herself, her parents, and the system"), this middle-grades biography is serviceably written, with the inherent appeals of a determined heroine and her exciting quest. Dramatic color photographs add both information and atmosphere. RS
D.V. Perseverance

Wersba, Barbara. *The Farewell Kid*. Zolotow/Harper, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026397-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026378-4. 155p. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95.

Ad Gr. 7-10. This is a sequel to *Just Be Gorgeous* (BCCB 12/88) and *Wonderful Me* (BCCB 4/89) and again has nonconformist Heidi Rosenbloom as narrator. It also brings back the protagonist of an earlier Wersba book, Harvey Beaumont (*The Carnival in My Mind*, BCCB 10/82), to achieve a happy love affair between two hitherto unhappy poor little rich kids. Declaring she will not go to college, Heidi rents a former barbershop so that she can set up a dog rescue operation, and Harvey eventually joins her, becoming her lover and hoping for marriage. The story is not wholly believable, but that's part of the fun. The style is yeasty and the characters are colorful. The whole, however, seems to be less than its parts because of the uneven pace, the repetitious incidents (trouble with obedience from the dogs, for example) and the lack of variation in tone. ZS
D.V. Independence

Wild, Margaret. *The Very Best of Friends*; illus. by Julie Vivas. Harcourt, 1990. ISBN 0-15-200625-7. 32p. \$13.95.

R 5-8 yrs. Jessie and James are an affectionate, aging couple who run "a farm with fifty cattle, twenty chickens, four horses, . . . three dogs"—and one cat, William. James loves William, Jessie does not; but they compromise until James dies and Jessie rejects William in her grieving isolation. Almost too late, she rescues him from the wild, a tomcat turned lean and mean with a torn ear and bald patches. The cycle of death and reconciliation doesn't really comprise a plot, but young listeners will be held by the loss and recovery of a vulnerable pet. As in her art work for *The Nativity* (BCCB 9/88), Vivas' spare watercolor spreads are strong on expressive postures and unexpected perspectives. There may be a moment of confusion between the gray spotted dogs and the gray striped cat, all remarkably alike in shape, but the main characters and creatures ultimately emerge with unmistakable individuality and homely appeal. BH
D.V. Death, adjustment to

Williams, Karen. *Galimoto*; illus. by Catherine Stock. Lothrop, 1990. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-08790-6; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-08789-2. 32p. Library ed. \$12.88; Trade ed. \$12.95.

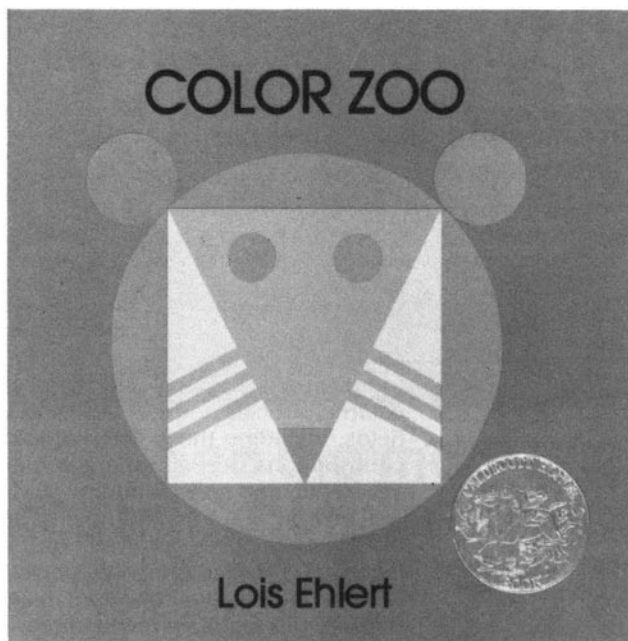
R 4-6 yrs. You won't get more than three pages into this without listeners insisting "What's a galimoto?"—a suspense (*we're* not telling) well served and fairly resolved in this simple story set in Malawi. Kondi wants to make a galimoto, but he doesn't have enough wire in his "box of things." Undeterred, he trades his knife, combs junkyards and backyards, and teaches a little girl how to use a stick to probe an anthill—all industrious strategies for getting more wire to build a galimoto. Refreshingly contemporary details about life in Kondi's village are casually inflected in the text and pictures, with children playing at an anthill twice as big as themselves, another child wearing a "Disco" t-shirt, mothers shopping at a store that sells aspirin as well as colorful cloth. Stock's watercolors, summer-green and flexibly lined, inform Kondi's quest with good-natured dignity. To the satisfaction of all, the book closes with a double-page close-up of a galimoto in action. Better have on hand an ample supply of old hangers and paper clips—even the most sophisticated American kid will want to attempt the construction of this elegant little toy. RS
D.V. Love for toy; Perseverance

Wood, Phyllis Anderson. *The Revolving Door Stops Here*. Cobblehill, 1990. ISBN 0-525-65022-9. 188p. \$13.95.

Ad Gr. 7-9. Eric, now seventeen, has been in several foster homes since he was eight; his mother has died and his father, who had left his family before that, has sent support checks but has never made an effort to see or write to his son. When his tearful foster mother tells Eric that he will have to go in order to make room for her married daughter's family, he wonders who will take in a person his age. The revolving door stops when a school counselor and his wife offer Eric a home, eventually taking him with them when they move and giving him permanence and security. Eric finally hears from his father, who suggests they meet at an airport where he's changing flights. Offended by the cold, business-like manner added to the years of neglect, Eric gives up his dream of reunion with his natural father and accepts the fact that his family consists of the people who love him. The writing style is weak, as is the characterization; both lack depth or nuance. The plot is realistic but a bit too pat at the end, with the offer of a permanent home, the acquisition of new friends in the small town to which they have all moved, and the arrival of a baby who is instantly loved by Eric as his little brother. ZS

CORRECTION: Maria Gripe's *Agnes Cecilia*, reviewed in the March issue, is translated from the Swedish by Rika Lesser. It will not be illustrated.

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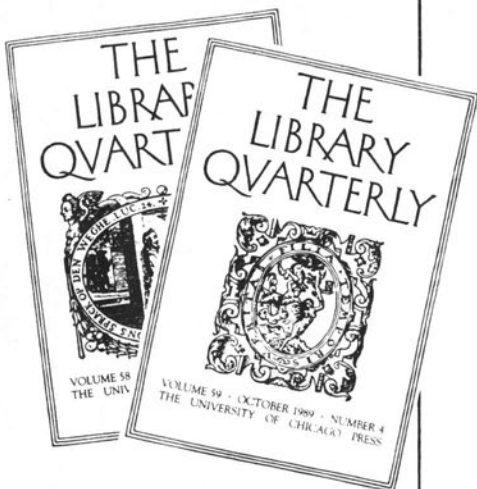
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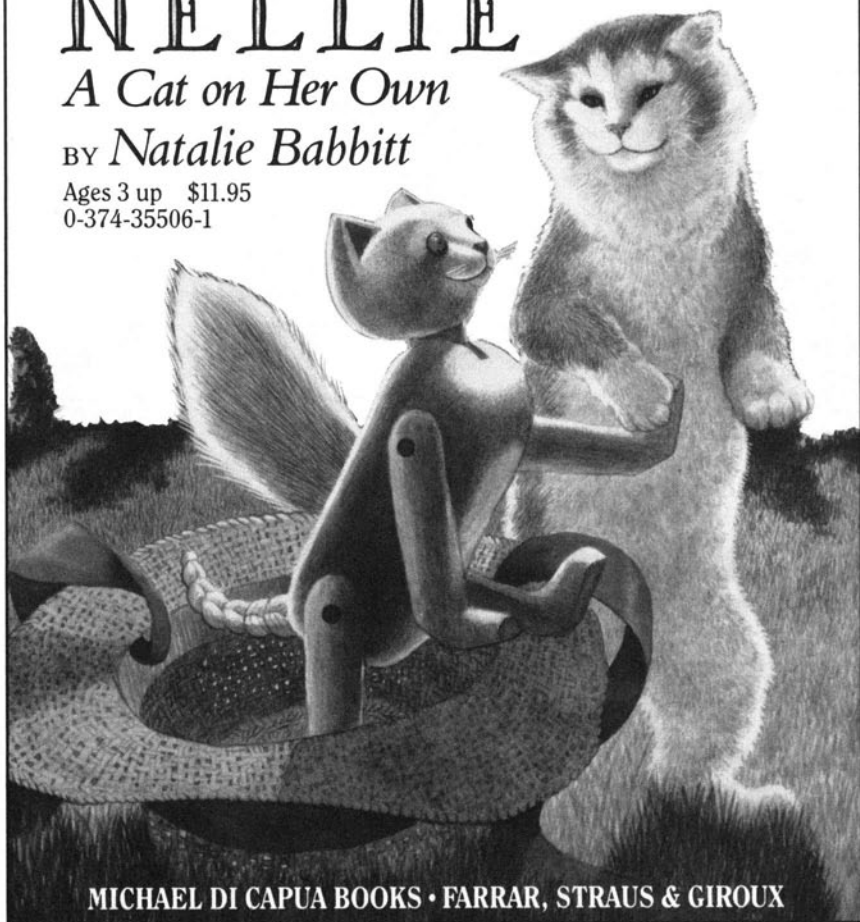
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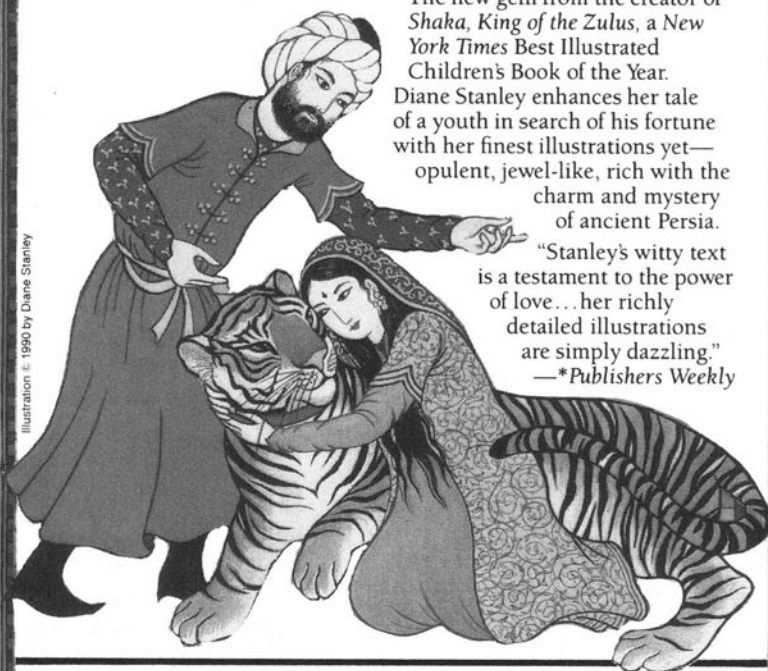
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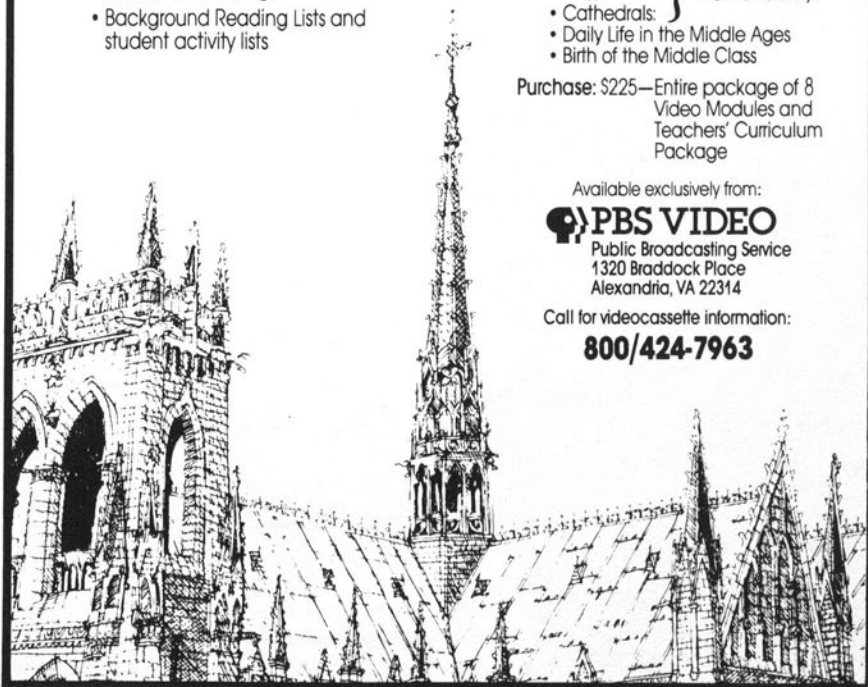
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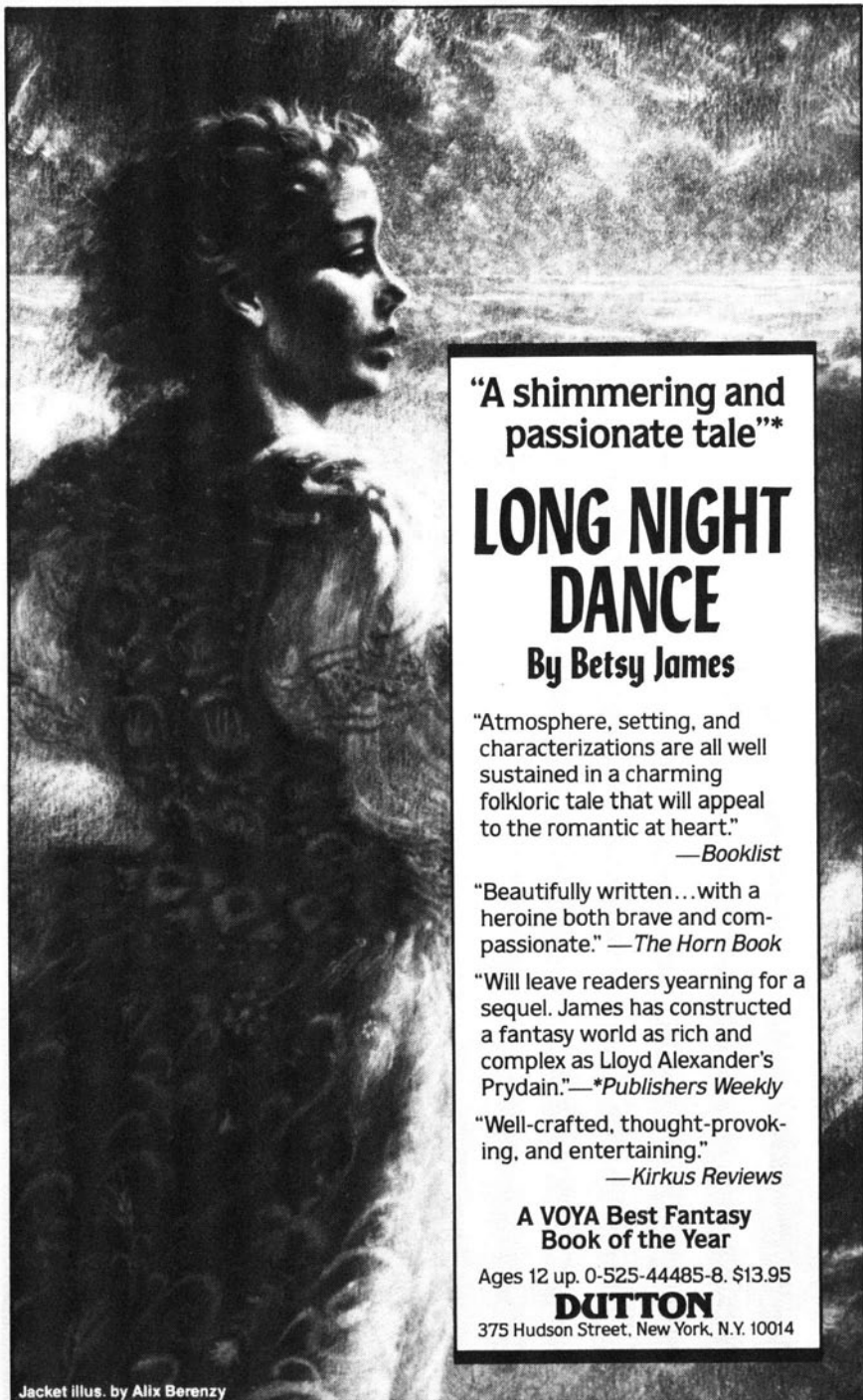
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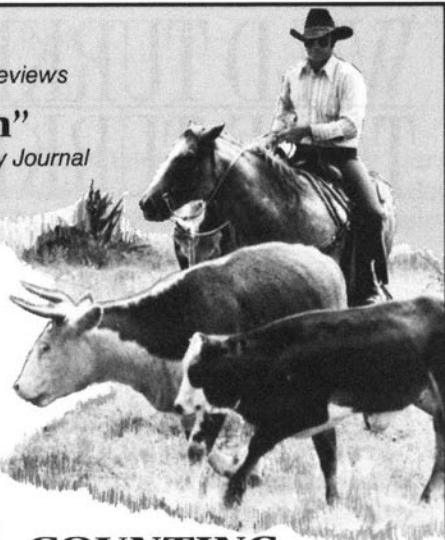
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AWARDS

The Newbery Medal will be awarded to Lois Lowry for *Number the Stars* (Houghton). Newbery Honor books are *Afternoon of the Elves* by Janet Taylor Lisle (Orchard); *Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind* by Suzanne Fisher Staples (Knopf); and *The Winter Room* by Gary Paulsen (Orchard).

The Caldecott Medal will be awarded to Ed Young for *Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China*, which he also translated (Philomel). Caldecott Honor books are *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (Holiday House); *The Talking Eggs*, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney (Dial); *Bill Peet: An Autobiography*, illustrated by Bill Peet (Houghton); and *Color Zoo*, illustrated by Lois Ehler (Lippincott).

The American publisher receiving the Batchelder Award for the most outstanding translation of a book originally published in a foreign language is Dutton Children's Books for *Buster's World* by Bjarne Reuter, translated by Anthea Bell.

The Coretta Scott King Award will be presented to Patricia and Frederick McKissack, authors of *A Long Hard Journey* (Walker & Co.), for writing and to Jan Spivey Gilchrist, illustrator of *Nathaniel Talking* (A Black Butterfly Children's Book), for illustration. Honor books for writing are Eloise Greenfield's *Nathaniel Talking* (A Black Butterfly Children's Book), Virginia Hamilton's *The Bells of Christmas* (Harcourt), and Lillie Patterson's *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Freedom Movement* (Facts on File). The Honor book for illustration is *The Talking Eggs*, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney (Dial).

The Scott O'Dell Award for historical fiction will be given to Carolyn Reeder for *Shades of Gray* (Macmillan).

The Canadian Library Association's Best Book of the Year for Children is *Easy Avenue* by Brian Doyle. The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon award for illustration goes to Kim LaFave for her illustrations in Janet Lunn's *Amos's Sweater*.

The Carnegie Medal book is *A Pack of Lies* by Geraldine McCaughrean (Oxford).

The Kate Greenaway Medal book is *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* by Martin Waddell, illustrated by Barbara Firth.

The School Library Journal/YASD Author Achievement Award will be given to Richard Peck.

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